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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations; special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation for selected countries and regions

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report, prepared in response to requests made by the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh, fifty-eighth and fifty-ninth sessions, provides information on humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance given to countries undergoing or emerging from a humanitarian crisis induced by conflict or natural causes such as drought.

The report concludes with the recommendation that the situation in certain of these countries, which have passed the crisis stage and now benefit primarily from reconstruction and development assistance rather than relief aid, should no longer be considered under the agenda item entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance".

* A/60/150.

** The submission of the report was delayed because of the requirements of the consolidated reporting framework.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted to the General Assembly in compliance with its requests in the resolutions mentioned in section II below and provides information on relief and rehabilitation assistance supplied by the United Nations and its partners to countries affected by various types of natural and man-made disasters. In keeping with the request of the Assembly to the Secretariat to consolidate and streamline reports wherever possible, the country reports under the present agenda item have again been consolidated into a single document covering six countries.

II. Humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance to individual countries

A. Djibouti

2. By its resolution 58/116 of 17 December 2003, the General Assembly, inter alia, noted with satisfaction the implementation of a reform programme by the Government of Djibouti, and appealed to the international community to respond adequately to the financial and material needs of the country in line with the poverty reduction strategy paper.

Humanitarian situation

3. On 13 April 2004, widespread flooding affected Djibouti, especially the capital, Djibouti City. At least 60 people were believed to have been drowned by the torrential rains. Another 1,500 people were made homeless after rising waters washed away their homes. Many of the homeless, including Somali and Oromo refugees from neighbouring countries, had been living in the river wadis, or dry watercourses.

4. The Government of Djibouti appointed an ad hoc disaster management committee to address the situation. The committee informed both bilateral and multilateral partners of its intention to mobilize resources locally as the situation did not require the launch of a United Nations flash appeal. Short-term humanitarian needs were covered by the Government, donors and United Nations agencies, and included food aid distribution to more than 20,000 families, health and nutrition, malaria control and treatment, immunization activities, and water and sanitation programmes.

5. In the longer term, the Government of Djibouti sought $20 million to revive an earlier plan to permanently relocate people living in the country's main wadis, which fill during the rainy season, to higher ground, where they would be safer from flooding. That plan was first drawn up after a flood that killed nearly 100 people in the capital.

6. Djibouti is currently facing a severe food crisis in five of six rural zones as a consequence of three consecutive failed rainy seasons and worsening drought conditions. Delayed rains and erratic rainfall patterns have been insufficient to replenish water catchments or regenerate pastures. Pastoralists from Djibouti and neighbouring areas in Somalia, Eritrea and Ethiopia have been forced to continue

seasonal grazing in coastal Djibouti beyond the restorative capacities of the land. Pasture and browse areas are overgrazed and exhausted. Water catchments in the north-west and south-east pastoral zones are practically dry.

7. Since May 2005, the Government and the World Food Programme (WFP) distributed 421 metric tons of food aid. WFP has provided about 500 metric tons of mixed commodities. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has provided $20,000 for fuel for generators that operate boreholes and $20,000 for other logistics support to the national office for response to disaster, and ordered nine generators and nine water pumps worth $150,000 to support existing wells/boreholes. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) released $10,000 for emergency rehabilitation of existing boreholes. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) contributed $50,000 for coordination activities, including local capacity-building. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs fielded a humanitarian officer to provide technical assistance.

8. Immediate needs are mainly for food aid for 47,500 persons and the provision of water for 18,000 of those individuals. Water points and boreholes need rehabilitation and maintenance, and running costs must be provided. Supplementary feeding for 9,500 children is needed, as is medical care for 5,000 persons. Given the nomadic nature of the most vulnerable affected populations, mobile health services are the most appropriate option. Animal feed and emergency veterinary care for 50,000 head of livestock are an urgent requirement, as is the provision of water for livestock. Disaster management structures at the national and local levels need reinforcement.

9. The Government of Djibouti has instituted policy measures designed to relieve the high food prices and is working with the United Nations to increase access to food and water for the most vulnerable. Despite that assistance, the shocks occurring at the same time as the drought depleted the remaining resources available to pastoralists, and the Government therefore requested supplementary international assistance to respond to that added emergency. A flash appeal was launched on 27 April 2005 for $7,494,198 primarily for food and water for thousands of drought-stricken people. To date, 26.8 per cent of the needs have been funded.

Implementation of longer-term solutions

10. Floods and droughts are the symptoms of a systemic problem in Djibouti related to overuse of water resources and climate change. Recurrent droughts are resulting in increasing household food insecurity, malnutrition among children and women, and high child morbidity rates. This downward spiral needs to be addressed immediately through development efforts. The United Nations country team is therefore formulating a joint programme to address malnutrition and food security.

Economic reform programme

11. The Djibouti economy relies heavily on the services sector, which accounts for 80 per cent of gross national product (GNP) and 80 per cent of jobs. In addition to lacking natural resources, the primary and industrial sectors of the country are poorly developed, and represent 5 per cent and 15 per cent of GNP, respectively.

12. Djibouti's lack of resources and its strategic geographical position are important factors of its economy. Services make up about 70 per cent of the gross

domestic product (GDP) and are mainly centred on port activity and road and railway connections. Agriculture and industry make up only 3 per cent and 17 per cent of GDP, respectively. With little fertile land and limited rainfall (less than 0.3 per cent of land is arable), agriculture plays a limited role.

13. In 1996, the Government began implementing an economic adjustment and restructuring programme supported by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, and also implemented reforms in the areas of public finance, social security, public enterprises, education and health. In 2000, the Government worked out a temporary poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP), whose main objectives were to (a) boost economic growth; (b) develop human resources; (c) strengthen social services; and (d) modernize the State and promote good governance.

14. The results of the programme have been encouraging but are still insufficient. Macroeconomic progress has included reductions in the budget deficit and in the balance of current transactions, decreasing to 2.1 per cent and 4.3 per cent of GDP, respectively, in 2001. However, that progress was not accompanied by a reversal of the trend towards greater deterioration of the social situation. The data from the 2002 household survey, "Enquête Djiboutienne auprès des ménages", show that the incidence of relative poverty and extreme poverty during the period 1996-2002 has seen a dramatic rise, increasing from 64.9 per cent to 74.4 per cent and from 34.5 per cent to 42.2 per cent, respectively. The results also show that poverty is generalized and touches all socio-economic categories of society.

The poverty reduction strategy paper

15. Recent studies have shown the structural character and the massive extent of poverty in Djibouti, making it imperative to develop and implement a poverty reduction strategy. In 2003, Djibouti adopted a poverty reduction strategy paper, "Cadre stratégique de lutte contre la pauvreté", which was officially endorsed by the international financial institutions in June 2004. The strategy rests on a long-term vision that capitalizes on the strategic assets of the country, as well as policies and reforms conducive to long-lasting equitable economic growth and decrease in unemployment.

16. The poverty reduction strategy paper rests on four pillars. The first pillar seeks to strengthen the competitiveness of the country and create conditions conducive to strong and sustainable economic growth through: (a) the pursuit of stabilization policies in the macroeconomic framework and structural reforms; (b) the implementation of a judicial and institutional framework that attracts investment and removes obstacles to private sector development; (c) the promotion of Djibouti as an economic and financial platform competitive at the regional level, and optimal exploitation of the growth potential of the country; and (d) the construction of infrastructure and the reduction of costs of production factors.

17. The second pillar seeks to accelerate the development of human resources through a programme targeted at poverty areas and vulnerable populations, including: (a) improving access to health care and education for the poor; (b) implementing an employment promotion policy through the development of high intensity methods for manual labour, promotion of microfinance, development of job training and support of sectors which directly benefit the poor (agriculture, husbandry, etc); and (c) setting up social protection nets for the most vulnerable

segments of the population (children living on the streets, nomads and the homeless). The strategy specifically targets women.

18. The third pillar seeks to reduce poverty, particularly improving access to water, food security and basic services for the poor. The policies and programmes will centre on the four outlying areas of Djibouti City (districts 4 and 5, notably), on cities in the interior and on rural areas.

19. The fourth pillar seeks to promote good political, local, economic and financial governance, strengthen capacities for planning and administrative management, and modernize its ways and means. The priority is to better manage public expenditure and improve its equity and effectiveness in order to create a true instrument for combating poverty.

20. United Nations agencies have provided a coordinated response to the financial, material and technical needs of Djibouti through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), 2002-2007. The United Nations country team is in the process of aligning UNDAF to the Djibouti poverty reduction strategy paper through the UNDAF mid-year review, to be finalized in November 2005.

B. Ethiopia

21. By its resolution 59/217, the General Assembly, inter alia, called upon the international community to respond to the 2005 joint appeal of the United Nations and the Government of Ethiopia for emergency assistance for Ethiopia, covering food and non-food needs, encouraged the international community to support the programme prepared by the New Coalition for Food Security in Ethiopia and called upon all development partners, in cooperation with the Government of Ethiopia, to integrate relief efforts with recovery, asset protection and long-term development.

Emergency and longer-term food security responses

22. In 2004, an effort was made to differentiate between the chronically and acutely food-insecure populations, and two complementary action plans were developed. The 2005 humanitarian appeal was designed to address the acute needs of the unpredictable food-insecure population, while the Productive Safety Net Programme tackled longer-term food security needs.

23. The objective of the Programme was to provide approximately 5 million chronically food-insecure people with assistance in the form of cash or food for labour, while the humanitarian appeal aimed to provide an additional 3.1 million people with emergency food and non-food assistance, aimed at saving lives and protecting livelihoods. While the total number of food aid beneficiaries covered by the two plans rose slightly to 8 million people, the number of beneficiaries covered under the 2005 humanitarian appeal was substantially lower than the 7.8 million beneficiaries in 2004.

24. The Government of Ethiopia officially launched the Programme on 16 February 2005 and transfers to beneficiaries began in April. Initial delays in initiating cash transfers to many cash beneficiaries put stress on the chronically food-insecure (70 per cent of the 4.8 million beneficiaries are cash beneficiaries). To address the situation, blanket supplementary food was available on request in areas of high malnutrition within safety net *woredas* (districts). In June, a one-off transfer

of cash to beneficiaries equivalent to three months worth of allocation was provided to make up for delays. The number of safety net beneficiaries was also revised in June to 4.8 million, to include a 20 per cent contingency in the Amhara region, which, if applied to all regions, would raise the number of beneficiaries to 5.4 million.

25. The humanitarian situation began to show signs of deterioration in early 2005, with data indicating acute malnutrition, rising concern about the survival of children in some areas, worsening food security conditions and general stress among the vulnerable population in hotspot areas. In contrast to previous years, when only limited nutrition information was available, the Enhanced Outreach Strategy/Child Survival Initiative (EOS), combined with a multitude of nutrition surveys, provided detailed information on the nutritional status of children. By May 2005, 136,000 children in the most vulnerable areas were severely malnourished. It was estimated that that figure could grow to 370,000 if the trend continued. Global acute malnutrition rates were well above emergency threshold levels in a number of areas, reaching more than 15 per cent.

26. In the light of the situation, a flash update to the humanitarian appeal was issued in May 2005. The number of food aid beneficiaries was increased from 3.1 million to 3.8 million. Non-food needs, which had been seriously underfunded, were also increased from $112 million to $135.6 million.

27. The donor response to the food component of the flash update dramatically improved in mid-2005. By June, emergency food requirements for 2005 had been exceeded, but needs were expected to grow. Funding for targeted supplementary feeding within the EOS programme had likewise significantly improved, but the non-food element of EOS had received just 20 per cent of the necessary funding and required immediate investment to achieve its objectives. The non-food sector in total was only 48 per cent funded.

28. The results of the June 2005 crop and pastoral area assessments found that an additional 471,510 new beneficiaries will require food aid for the second half of 2005 due to localized failure of the mid-year harvest. From August 2005 to December 2005 approximately 3.3 million people will continue to need emergency relief assistance.

29. Extensive flooding in May affected an additional 55,000 vulnerable people in the Somali, Oromiya and Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Regions. At the same time, the rains brought some drought relief to parts of the country, particularly lowland/pastoral areas that had suffered from several consecutive years of drought. Pasture in those areas has been rejuvenated and water sources replenished. Many of the *belg*-producing areas also received good rainfall.

30. In addition, there are concerns for internally displaced people (IDPs) in eastern Oromiya, the Somali region and the Gambella region, where conflict and ethnic tensions have caused displacement. Limited access to some populations in Gambella, coupled with a lack of adequate support and in some cases lack of official recognition of the displaced, has left many IDPs without food and other basic items. This situation reflects a more general challenge of providing assistance to those displaced from their home communities in the absence of clear policies and responsibilities regarding IDPs.

31. United Nations agencies continue to monitor the Ethiopia-Eritrea border demarcation process, and maintain preparedness to support humanitarian interventions for populations affected by changes in the situation in the border area.

Conclusions

32. While progress has been made in developing complementarity between the humanitarian appeal and the Productive Safety Net Programme, inadequate support for the humanitarian appeal and delays in the implementation of the Programme did not allow for a timely response to the growing food security crisis and rising malnutrition rates in early 2005. Key lessons have been learned and actions will be taken to ensure that the two programmes are more closely linked and managed in 2006.

33. Drought remains a chronic hazard in Ethiopia, and is related to the erosion of the natural resource base through the pressure of high population growth, deforestation, desiccation of water resources, insufficient family farming plots and climate change. Recurrent droughts cause increased vulnerability, and people sell household assets as a coping mechanism. The downward spiral needs to be addressed immediately through development efforts.

34. As efforts to address longer-term food insecurity progress, shocks will continue to have the potential to place hundreds of thousands of the rural poor in acute need of humanitarian assistance. Consequently, the Government and the international community must support and strengthen emergency management capacities and provide humanitarian relief, but in a way that supports longer-term solutions to food and livelihood insecurity.

C. Kazakhstan

35. By its resolution 57/101, on international cooperation and coordination for the human and ecological rehabilitation and economic development of the Semipalatinsk region of Kazakhstan, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report at its sixtieth session on progress made in the implementation of that resolution. This report summarizes actions undertaken in the past three years by the United Nations system, the Government of Kazakhstan and the international community in the Semipalatinsk region, and concludes that the efforts have not been sufficient to mitigate the suffering caused by years of nuclear testing.

Economic and social conditions

36. The Semipalatinsk nuclear testing area is a lingering consequence of the cold war. Between 1949 and 1989, 468 nuclear tests, including 125 above-ground tests, were conducted in this 18,500 km^2 polygon. Although this area was developed and used exclusively by the Soviet Union, the burden of dealing with the consequences fell on Kazakhstan when it gained independence in the early 1990s.

37. This burden is significant: an estimated 1,323,000 people were negatively affected by the tests, and many continue to suffer today. While the national mortality rate in 2003 from oncological diseases was 126 per 100,000 people, the rate was 163 and 189 per 100,000 people, respectively, in the Pavlodar and East Kazakhstan *oblasts*, where the nuclear test site was located.

38. Recognizing the international responsibilities connected to Semipalatinsk and the severity of the health, environmental and social problems there, the General Assembly adopted four resolutions between 1997 and 2002 calling on the international community to assist the Government of Kazakhstan in its efforts to overcome those problems.[1]

39. In September 1999, an international conference on Semipalatinsk was organized in Tokyo to consider the Semipalatinsk Relief and Region Rehabilitation Programme. The programme consisted of 38 impact-oriented projects valued at $43 million for relief and rehabilitation in five main areas: health, environment and ecology, economic recovery, humanitarian support, and information and advocacy. In response, the international donor community pledged more than $20 million in assistance. Since then, numerous projects have been supported by the Government of Kazakhstan and the international community to help rehabilitate the region. Although much has been accomplished, the severity of the problems has thus far outweighed the efforts to resolve them.

40. Thus, in its resolution 57/101, the General Assembly stressed again the need for continuing international attention to address the problems of the Semipalatinsk region, further urged the international community to provide assistance and invited all Member States to share their knowledge and experience in order to contribute to the rehabilitation and economic development of the Semipalatinsk region.

Institutional framework for assistance to Semipalatinsk

41. Prior to the Tokyo conference in 1999, the Government in Kazakhstan formed an interministerial commission to develop a comprehensive plan of action and secure donor funding for Semipalatinsk. Although that commission presented a list of high-priority projects and secured funding from the donor community in Tokyo, implementation of the programme has been somewhat fragmentary in nature, due to insufficient financial resources to tackle numerous high-priority problems simultaneously, high turnover among responsible staff members, unfulfilled commitments by donors, numerous smaller ad hoc projects being undertaken by local bodies and non-governmental organizations outside the main programme, etc.

42. Partly because of those problems and partly due to the growing capacities and prosperity of Kazakhstan stemming from international investments and oil sales during the past six years, donor interest and assistance to Semipalatinsk has waned in recent years.

43. In an effort to revive interest and to better coordinate Semipalatinsk activities, the Kazakhstan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and UNDP organized a local donor meeting in Almaty in February 2004 to take stock of what had been accomplished, set priorities for further actions, and present additional high-priority projects to the donor community. The donor community indicated that with a vibrant and growing economy and significant State resources, the Government needed to take the lead in setting the agenda for Semipalatinsk, coordinating assistance and demonstrating its commitment through supporting rehabilitation efforts with State resources.

44. In follow up to that meeting, the Government developed a new programme for the period 2005-2007 to address solutions for problems of the former Semipalatinsk nuclear test site (for more detail, see paras. 59 and 60 below).

Donor assistance to the Semipalatinsk region

45. Through the 1999 Tokyo conference, more than $20 million was pledged by the international community, including the Governments of Japan, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Switzerland, the World Bank, United Nations agencies, Counterpart International and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (ICRC). Most pledges were received, but were considerably less than what is needed and some pledges remain unfulfilled.

46. This section provides a summary of progress made in implementing the Semipalatinsk Relief and Rehabilitation Programme since the last report to the General Assembly in July 2002.[2] Unfortunately, most donor programmes are now coming or have already come to an end, despite serious problems in the areas of health, environmental degradation and economic development. More important, there are no indications that the trend of reduced support will end. Fewer organizations are offering support and the magnitude of support is considerably smaller.

47. It should be noted that non-governmental organizations and local authorities independently implement projects, and thus the information provided here may not provide a complete picture of all assistance.

Health sector

48. The Japanese Government has supported a major project on the improvement of the regional health-care system in the Semipalatinsk region, which will end in 2005. It provides medical assistance to help improve health checks, diagnosis of illnesses, data processing for systemic studies, etc.

49. The European Commission, through its Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (Tacis) Programme, is implementing an institution-building project to improve women's awareness of their reproductive health rights, train medical personnel on the human rights of women, introduce the concept of low-risk pregnancy and promote intervention-free childbirth. Tacis will also fund a nuclear safety project on the theme "Support for implementing an aero-gamma survey of the Semipalatinsk test site".

50. UNICEF has supported various initiatives, covering areas such as developing child-friendly curriculums, promoting improved parenting skills, training trainers for doctors and nurses, and working with children with special needs to develop alternatives to institutionalization. UNICEF intends to continue developing peer education and life skills-based health education in cooperation with non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

51. The United States Agency for International Development is implementing a community-oriented primary care project in association with the American International Health Alliance. This project is based on a model family medicine centre in Astana. Local clubs offer a wide range of health education training, counselling and other health-related activities.

52. The National Red Crescent Society (RCS) of Kazakhstan is implementing three projects in the health sector focusing on tuberculosis prevention, safe motherhood and community-based primary care in rural areas and villages. These projects have been under way for four years and will continue for another two years,

with support from the Japanese Red Cross. The RCS also works to raise public awareness on and improve public preparedness for emergencies, and currently supports two projects on the themes "Public confidence", which includes training on emergency responses, and "Mitigation", which includes clearing burnt wood and planting pine trees.

53. Finally, two projects have recently been finalized, on the themes "Rights of women and social partnership" and "Voice-Protection of voters' rights", which are financed by the European Union through the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights.

Humanitarian sector

54. The Government of Switzerland recently completed a project targeting vulnerable groups, in which support was given to small projects in the amount of $20,000. Those grants also targeted vulnerable groups by, for example, supplying orphanages with equipment such as laundry machines, computers, etc.

55. The Canadian International Development Agency, through the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives, supported two small projects on sustainable agricultural development implemented by the "Umit Tani" Centre for children, orphans and invalids in Semipalatinsk city.

Environmental sector

56. The United Kingdom Department for International Development is currently completing an environmental project on the theme "Preparation and implementation of a participatory land use plan for the Semipalatinsk test site". This project aims to develop and implement a participatory land use plan for areas that are safe for people and their animals. The plan will be developed in conjunction with local inhabitants so that it can be applied through present administrative structures based in the East Kazakhstan, Karaganda and Pavlodar *oblasts*.

57. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) makes scientific data from environmental mapping of residential and public premises in towns adjacent to the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site available in a user-friendly way. In 2005, OSCE is conducting a summer camp for teenagers from villages near the test site to raise awareness about the environmental situation and sustainable development.

Economic sector

58. The UNDP Semipalatinsk programme was funded by the Government of Japan, which contributed $1.1 million through the Trust Fund for the Semipalatinsk Relief and Rehabilitation Programme, a fund created by UNDP in response to United Nations resolutions calling for international assistance. This programme, which ends in 2005, included three sub-projects: microcredit for women, small grants for non-governmental and community-based organizations, and business advisory services. According to an independent evaluation conducted in 2004, this programme made substantial progress in helping to alleviate poverty and raise living standards among targeted groups such as women, small-scale entrepreneurs and rural people.

Priorities for further action

59. In 2005, the Government of Kazakhstan is launching a programme to address the problems of the former Semipalatinsk nuclear test site during the period 2005-2007. The main goal is to improve the ecological, economic, medical and social factors affecting the living standards of population in the region. The expected results are (a) a reduction in morbidity rates; and (b) a more secure situation with regard to radiation, which would be met by undertaking activities in the areas of medical rehabilitation; radiological assessment and security; social infrastructure development; and scientific and technical diversification.

60. The Government of Kazakhstan is expected to provide KZT 2.47 billion (approximately $18.9 million) to finance this programme. Because it is a State programme, it outlines only activities and support from the Government itself and does not indicate what role other actors such as donors, non-governmental organizations and the private sector could play. The programme could be strengthened by including those actors and providing measures to better coordinate their activities.

Conclusion

61. The situation in the Semipalatinsk region remains critical with more than 1.3 million people still suffering from the effects of almost 40 years of nuclear tests. The Semipalatinsk polygon has yet to be secured, the local economy is still suffering from the collapse of the Soviet Union, and high morbidity and mortality rates illustrate the high price paid by local people for this legacy of the cold war.

62. The Government of Kazakhstan and the international community have made some efforts to ameliorate these problems from the days of the Soviet Union. The Government has implemented numerous programmes and has developed a programme to address the problems of the former Semipalatinsk nuclear test site during the period 2005-2007. The donor community has delivered a substantial amount of assistance since the Tokyo conference in 1999. However, much remains to be done. Member States, in partnership with the Government of Kazakhstan, should strengthen their efforts to assist the people of Semipalatinsk.

63. In implementing the new programme, the Government of Kazakhstan will be able to provide much-needed assistance in the areas of medicine, radiology, science and social welfare. Under the umbrella of this programme, the Government also has the opportunity to renew its efforts to coordinate assistance from State resources and the international community. That could be done through establishing a multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism that includes relevant Government ministries, donors, local governments and civil society organizations. The Government of Kazakhstan may call on the United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP in Kazakhstan to assist in the effort.

64. With the Government taking a stronger role in delivering and coordinating assistance, Member States should take complementary actions. In particular, donors and members of the Commonwealth of Independent States must continue to recognize their special obligations to the people of Semipalatinsk, whose suffering stems from the cold war. Member States should first and foremost fulfil all previous pledges, and second, consider what additional expertise and/or resources they could offer to lessen the suffering in Semipalatinsk.

65. The recent economic prosperity experienced by Kazakhstan is insufficient to resolve the deeply rooted and highly technical problems of radioactive contamination in the Semipalatinsk region. The Government of Kazakhstan is demonstrating its commitment to Semipalatinsk with its new programme. With assistance, and in partnership with other Member States, this commitment could produce better results than those that have been achieved thus far.

D. Rwanda

66. By its resolution 59/137, the General Assembly, inter alia, invites agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system to continue to develop and implement programmes in support of survivors of the 1994 genocide, utilizing existing resources and encouraging the mobilization of additional voluntary contributions, and requests the Secretary-General to report to the sixtieth session of the General Assembly on the implementation by United Nations agencies of programmes aimed at supporting vulnerable groups.

Background

67. The United Nations returned to Rwanda in the wake of the 1994 genocide and immediately started rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts. The most pressing effort was supporting the Government to re-establish law and order, providing relief to a traumatized populace, and supporting the rehabilitation of basic services. The emergency phase that started immediately after the genocide and the development phase that later followed manifested the strong involvement of United Nations agencies. The United Nations country team has actively mobilized resources to scale up United Nations support to survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.

68. Rwanda, with support from the international community, has made significant progress in areas of rehabilitation, reconstruction, reconciliation and social and political justice. During these years of recovery, and under extraordinarily difficult circumstances for the country, the United Nations system has partnered with the Government and people of Rwanda, making laudable contributions towards positive change and development.

The response of the United Nations country team

69. The United Nations country team paid particular attention to the resettlement of vulnerable groups such as orphans, widows, returnees and internally displaced persons during the rehabilitation and reconstruction process. Technical and financial support was provided by various United Nations agencies in the formulation and implementation of social and economic policies that benefit the poor and disadvantaged. This support resulted in policies on good governance, gender equality and empowerment, and strengthened capacities of the Government to address economic and social challenges.

70. The past 11 years have witnessed increased commitment by the United Nations country team in the areas of institution-building and infrastructure development, health and education, the fight against HIV/AIDS, democratic governance, the reconciliation process and the justice system, which are fundamental to human development and rights-based approaches.

71. The daunting challenge of rebuilding a country devastated and traumatized by genocide can only be met by continuous collaboration and partnerships with development partners, civil society groups and the Government and people of Rwanda.

United Nations system support targeted at vulnerable groups: orphans, widows and victims of sexual violence

72. United Nations system support has included the areas set out below.

Education for orphans

73. UNICEF has been working on the development of a national policy for orphans and vulnerable children and on the integration of a costed programme and action plan in the strategic plan for the education sector.

74. In addition, a number of complementary education "catch-up" programmes for orphans and vulnerable children have been developed and implemented.

75. In order to promote a child-friendly environment for orphans, vulnerable children and girls, a number of "safe spaces" have been established in selected pilot schools, and a mentoring and peer support programme has been put in place on a pilot basis in 50 schools.

Medical care and treatment for victims of sexual violence, including HIV positive victims

76. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda has established a medical unit in its offices to ensure physical and psychological support to witnesses confirmed to appear before the Tribunal. Health care includes HIV/AIDS treatment and counselling for victims of gender-based violence.

77. The World Health Organization (WHO) has been supplying the Hope Clinic, which targets the Rwanda Women's Network, which gives support to women victims of violence during the 1994 genocide with medical supplies and laboratory equipment.

78. It has also been providing free drugs for HIV/AIDS treatment to AVEGA, the Association of widows of the 1994 genocide.

79. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has supported a prevention, care and treatment programme for victims of sexual violence in health institutions and local communities.

80. UNICEF has supported a paediatric care and support programme for children infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, which included the development of a policy on paediatric care and treatment.

81. UNDP and the United Nations Development Fund for Women are supporting a project on the theme "Enhancing protection against gender-based violence". This has included sensitization activities regarding victims and access to legal advice, as well as the strengthening of law enforcement bodies.

82. UNIFEM supported a study by African Rights ("Broken bodies, torn spirit: living with genocide, rape and HIV/AIDS"), which aimed to create awareness of the plight and suffering of Rwandan women.

Trauma and psychological programmes for genocide survivors

83. UNICEF is supporting children in need of psychosocial rehabilitation through the establishment of guidance and counselling desks in schools and the establishment and promotion of child participatory activities, including sports and recreation. Child protection networks have also been set up and training on dealing with trauma has been carried out with refugee families at community levels.

84. WFP is carrying out "food-for-training" programmes aimed at improving self-reliance of households affected by HIV/AIDS as a result of sexual violence during the genocide.

85. WHO is carrying out research on the effect and extent of violence on women during the 1994 genocide.

86. WHO has also elaborated a document on the management of trauma victims, and has trained trauma counsellors on how to address post-traumatic stress disorder. Trauma counsellors have been supported to provide counselling to members of families affected.

87. It has also strengthened capacities at local levels for trauma victims to receive treatment during the ongoing Gacaca trials (traditional court system), and has carried out capacity-building activities for staff working at the psychosocial centre, a referral centre for psychosocial problems.

88. UNFPA, WFP and UNIFEM have provided skills-training and microcredit programmes to promote self-sufficiency, targeted at women and child-headed households.

E. Somalia

89. By its resolution 59/218, the General Assembly, inter alia, urged the international community to implement its previous resolutions in order to assist the Somali people in embarking on the rehabilitation of basic social and economic services, and urged the international community to provide as a matter of urgency humanitarian assistance and relief to the Somali people to alleviate in particular the consequences of the prevailing drought.

Security conditions

96. Insecurity resulting from inter- and intra-clan conflict continued to prevail in many parts of Somalia, particularly in the south and central regions. The highly volatile security environment continues to restrict access to those communities, which remain vulnerable to harassment, exploitation and extortion. In the absence of a functioning government, clan-based groups have taken on the responsibility of providing security to their community with varying degrees of success.

91. General insecurity also affects humanitarian aid workers. In addition to traditional threats such as extortion, kidnapping and violent clashes, the perceived rise in militant fundamentalist groups presents another threat to humanitarian workers. Insecurity heightened in Mogadishu between January and April 2005, following the murder of two humanitarian aid workers and wounding of six others. In other areas of the southern and central regions, access has been seriously

disrupted while humanitarian needs have increased, particularly in the Gedo, the Middle and Lower Juba, and the Galgaduud regions.

92. The difficult operating environment led to enhanced measures to ensure the security of humanitarian workers, including the use of armed escorts. While those measures have helped reduce the risk to humanitarian staff, they have substantially increased agency operating costs. Given the security implications and the growing threats to the safety of aid workers, addressing security concerns is of prime importance for the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Limited resources to strengthen security and safety measures for humanitarian actors will heavily impact on the delivery of aid in Somalia by both the United Nations and the international NGO community.

Humanitarian issues

93. Humanitarian partners continued to respond to the humanitarian needs of an estimated 900,000 Somalis, including 500,000 affected by drought and between 370,000 and 400,000 IDPs. The volatile operational environment, marked by chronic insecurity, particularly in the centre and south, often obstructed access to those communities. UNICEF and WFP provided assistance in the food, health and nutrition, water and shelter sectors, in collaboration with partner NGOs. ILO labour-intensive projects have contributed to creating employment opportunities. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Humanitarian Response Fund continued to provide resources to bridge gaps in the humanitarian response.

94. The north-eastern coast of Somalia was affected by the Indian Ocean tsunami of 26 December 2004. An inter-agency assessment mission conducted in February 2005 reported that a total of 44,000 people had been affected, but that critical humanitarian needs such as food, shelter, water, health and non-food items had been largely met by the quick humanitarian response of United Nations agencies, local communities and NGOs. The generous and timely response of donors largely facilitated the interventions. The mission found that roughly 5 per cent of the affected population were in a state of humanitarian emergency, while 40 per cent are experiencing a livelihood crisis, as fishing boats and equipment were damaged or lost (the majority of the local communities relies on fishing as its primary source of income). Approximately 50 per cent of that group requires resources until the start of the next fishing season in October 2005. Continued relief and livelihood assistance is therefore required. United Nations agencies and NGOs have already embarked on recovery and development programmes focused on shelter construction, environmental assessments, water and sanitation, health, rehabilitation of schools and infrastructure.

95. Heavy rains and flash floods hit areas in Somaliland and Puntland, causing widespread damage to infrastructure. Humanitarian agencies were quick to respond in cooperation with the local authorities, and plans are ongoing for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of some of the damaged infrastructure, including strengthening river embankments and dams in Hargeisa in Somaliland, and rehabilitating roads in Bari and Nugal in Puntland.

96. Despite a poor start to the 2005 *gu* season (long rains from March to June), above normal amounts of rainfall in the Ethiopian catchments of the Shabelle and Juba Rivers led to rising river levels in southern Somalia, which in turn resulted in some of the worst localized flooding in several years. United Nations agencies,

NGOs, the ICRC and the Somali Red Crescent Society are working with local authorities to undertake assessments and interventions.

97. In mid-April 2005, cross-border intra-clan fighting in the Gedo region resulted in the displacement of an estimated 10,000 to 15,000 people. This region has the highest malnutrition rates in Somalia (up to 23 per cent) due in part to chronic food insecurity. Continued tensions still impede humanitarian access. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has initiated discussions for humanitarian access, which would enable a situation assessment and delivery of assistance.

Food security

98. The effects of more than three years of drought continue to be felt in Somalia. In late February 2005, the FAO Food Security Analysis Unit (FSAU) released its post-*deyr* analysis, which estimated that almost 500,000 people remain in a humanitarian emergency and livelihood crisis, with the most vulnerable in central and southern regions. Recovery is slow, as pastoralists have been unable to fully benefit from the improved conditions because of significantly reduced herd sizes, excessive debt levels and widespread and diffused destitution. Recovery is also hampered by recurrent civil strife, which limits access to markets, grazing and other resources.

99. The *deyr* 2004/05 cereal production fell to its lowest post-war production level in Juba and Shabelle due to inundation and localized floods as a result of above normal *deyr* rains. The Juba and Shabelle Valleys continue to be a cause of concern because of the poor performance of the 2005 *gu* rains. Normally, the *gu* season represents between 70 and 75 per cent of total annual food and fodder production. The Famine Early Warning System Network forecasts indicate that most parts of the agricultural areas in southern Somalia have received about 50 per cent of the anticipated rainfall. That will affect cereal production, availability and prices during the *gu* and the following *hagai* (dry) season. However, pastoral areas in the Lower Juba region received good rains, which are improving rangelands and livestock conditions.

100. The FSAU May 2005 nutrition update reported an overall improvement in the nutrition situation in northern Somalia and the Hiran region, linking the progress to ongoing humanitarian interventions in the regions. Organizations implementing food for work and cash transfer projects have also helped to offset debts and improve dietary intake. Notwithstanding that progress, continued assistance to those communities will be required in order to have a significant impact on livelihoods.

Economic situation

101. United Nations agencies and NGOs continue to be instrumental in assisting vulnerable rural and urban communities in rehabilitating, operating and maintaining their water supply systems, promoting hygiene and sanitation and assisting in the rebuilding of infrastructure.

102. The rehabilitation of the Dududle Canal in Jowhar, undertaken by the local administration and community with the support of WFP and UNDP, is the first development project in the central/south region in two decades, allowing for the regeneration of what was the most fertile part of Somalia, well known for its agricultural produce, which was exported to other countries in the region and

African countries. The collaborative effort created immediate employment opportunities (750 labourers) and has the potential to benefit more than 50,000 people by allowing access to water for irrigation and averting perennial flooding. Some 1,200 families are already drawing water from the canal, and that number is expected to increase as the subsequent irrigation gates off the canal are rehabilitated.

103. The private sector and remittances continue to buoy the Somali economy. However, there is a lack of institutional support to facilitate the development or regulation of private entrepreneurship. Moreover, the economy and a large proportion of the population remain vulnerable to shocks such as bans on the importation of Somali livestock, and natural disasters such as drought, floods, unseasonable weather and tsunamis.

104. To encourage economic diversification and to allow Somalis to benefit from their coastal waters, fishing sector assessments have been completed for Somaliland, Puntland and the central/south regions. The Somali coastline, the longest in Africa, thus far has been subject to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities and so far has not been utilized in its full development potential. The assessments will help inform a coherent and sustainable strategy to develop a commercially viable fisheries sector.

Conclusions

105. The effectiveness of the response to the tsunami can be attributed to four main factors: (a) the quick response by the local communities, which offered the first line of assistance; (b) the quick response by the aid community, despite various access problems; (c) pre-positioned stocks, which allowed for the quick transfer of aid; and (d) the generous and timely response by donors. The recurrence of similar events remains a possibility and early warning and preparedness systems for natural disasters need to be put in place. The United Nations is currently working to update the inter-Agency action plan for flood forecasting, preparedness and response for the Juba and Shabelle Rivers.

106. Although more than three years of drought have officially come to an end and efforts to address longer-term food insecurity in the country are progressing, the probability that such events could recur remains significant, with the potential to place hundreds of thousands of people in acute need of humanitarian assistance. Consequently, the authorities and the aid community must continue to support a strategy of providing humanitarian relief where needed and strengthening longer-term strategies to find solutions to food and livelihood insecurity. It will also be important to support the strengthening of security and safety measures for humanitarian workers on the ground.

F. Timor-Leste

107. By its resolution 58/121, the General Assembly, inter alia, urged the international community to continue to support the Government and the people of Timor-Leste in their endeavours towards self-sustainable nation-building and in facing the remaining vulnerabilities in all sectors, national reconciliation and the voluntary return of the remaining refugees to Timor-Leste and sustainable development.

Economic, social and political developments

108. The Government and people of Timor-Leste should be commended for the peace and stability they have achieved in the country, as well as for their continuing efforts towards consolidating democracy, strengthening State institutions, institutional capacity-building and social and economic development, especially towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals. The Millennium Development Goals have been intrinsically linked to the national development plan of the Government. That progress has been made possible through the commitment of the international community, the United Nations, other intergovernmental organizations, Member States and non-governmental organizations to self-sustainable nation-building and nationwide capacity-building in all sectors. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge the ongoing challenges, including the need for continued assistance to ensure sustained development, mainly in the areas of the rule of law, justice, human rights and support for the Timor-Leste police and other public administration; continued rehabilitation of infrastructural needs; provision of health services to the general population, including the rebuilding of hospitals; support to secondary and higher education; attention to psychosocial support, particularly children affected by violence; and greater participation of the women of Timor-Leste in all aspects of society, together with the need to address gender issues, including legislation to combat domestic violence and other gender-related crimes.

109. It is also important to further welcome the significant achievements of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation and its ongoing work on facilitating national reconciliation and the return of refugees to Timor-Leste. The final report is due to be completed by September 2005. Commitments to cooperate in other areas were also made at the recently concluded third meeting of the Joint Ministerial Commission for Bilateral Cooperation in Jakarta on 7 and 8 July 2005. A number of outstanding bilateral issues were discussed, such as border issues, trade and finance, legal matters, social, educational and cultural issues, and transport and communications. Regarding the border demarcation issue, both sides have agreed that the first marker would be placed in Montaan in Bobonaro District in mid-August and 44 markers will be in place by the end of September.

110. Also noteworthy is the commitment and contribution made by the Government of Indonesia and the international community to the Special Fund established for former employees and pensioners of the Government of Indonesia in Timor-Leste and the strong support provided by UNDP in disbursing funds from the Special Fund. The international community is strongly encouraged to consider increasing its contributions to address this ongoing need. In September 2003, the second meeting of the Joint Ministerial Commission for Bilateral Cooperation between Indonesia and Timor-Leste, which emphasized the importance of good relations and of further enhancing and facilitating cooperation in all areas of common interest, was most welcome.

111. With respect to recent political developments, through the efforts of the United Nations, with UNDP technical assistance, elections at the local level for village chiefs and sub-village chiefs were successfully held in 11 out of 13 districts. The remaining two districts will hold elections in September 2005. The Government has since requested electoral assistance in building democratic institutions in Timor-Leste from the United Nations and also for drafting the electoral laws and procedures needed for the national elections scheduled for 2007. This has been met

with positive and willing response from the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

112. Other significant developments in strengthening the legal and institutional framework include the establishment of two organs provided for in the Constitution, namely the Superior Council for Defence and Security and the Council of State. The establishment of those two bodies would provide the President of the Republic with the institutional support to carry out his mandated role.

113. Following some earlier tensions, relations between the State and Church have normalized and the much-improved internal security situation remains calm and peaceful. Mechanisms have also been put in place to curb the activities of martial groups through the initiative of President Gusmão, who has brokered a Joint Declaration with those groups aimed at preventing, reducing and eradicating acts of violence.

114. A number of pieces of legislation have recently received parliamentary approval, including the law on petroleum activities concerning the granting of access and drilling licenses and other industry regulations, 23 parliamentary resolutions to ratify the conventions on privileges and immunities of the United Nations and of the specialized agencies, and the parliamentary authorizations for the Government to pass the Penal Code, Criminal Procedure Code and Civil Procedure Code by way of Government Decree-Law without being debated in Parliament.

115. The United Nations continues to make a significant contribution to the social and economic development of Timor-Leste and in guiding the country towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals. The United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISET), which concluded in May 2005, has been succeeded by a special political mission, the United Nations Office in Timor-Leste (UNOTIL), with a new mandate until May 2006. UNOTIL will continue to support the development of critical State institutions; further development of the police; training in observance of democratic governance and human rights; and monitor and review progress of its mandated multifaceted activities. UNOTIL will continue to coordinate all United Nations activities in Timor-Leste, with particular attention to safety and personnel and planning for a smooth and rapid transition from a special political mission to a sustainable development assistance framework. That work is being carried out in close cooperation with the Government and the United Nations agencies and funds. A strategic framework for broader sustainable development assistance has already been initiated, with specific focus on institutional capacity development in the areas of public financial management, the rule of law and justice and democratic governance. A major objective of this renewed strategy is to continue to develop the capacity of Timorese civil servants and State institutions and to achieve improved coordination among all stakeholders.

III. Observations

116. In the situation of Djibouti, the crisis situation that gave rise to the provision of special economic assistance has essentially stabilized. While residual humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance for the international community may be required, the bulk of international aid should be geared towards sustainable economic development. Accordingly, it is recommended that, following the debate on special economic assistance to individual countries or regions at the current

session, the Assembly no longer consider the situation in Djibouti under that agenda item.

Notes

[1] The General Assembly resolutions on Semipalatinsk include resolutions 52/169 M, 53/1 H, 55/44 and 57/101.

[2] A/57/256.